

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

July 21, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 21, 2026 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Patrick Kaag; Council Pro-Tem Denise Drobnick; Council Members Justin Choate, Maggie Seaman, and Vicki Haller Graff; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Main Street Executive Director Nick Price; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Borough Manager Randall Miller; Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Member Bethany Bower was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Maureen Hasty, Resident
Alan Clouser, Resident	Susan Beam, Resident
Doug Olexy, Resident	Mark & Stephanie Burkholder, Visitors
Hannah Burkholder, Visitor	Randy Waltermeyer, Visitor
Lance Farmer, Fire Police (arrived 7:42 p.m. via Zoom)	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **COMMENDATION:** Mr. Miller and Mayor Kaag read aloud a commendation to former resident and Administrative Clerk Stephanie Burkholder for her years of service to the community.
3. **PRESENTATION:** Mr. Waltermeyer of Bowman Consulting provided a presentation on the Activate West Reading project. The transportation plan began with WalkWorks funding from the state in January. The project focused on a 12-block area that included the West Reading Elementary School and Penn Avenue. The Penn Avenue and Fifth Avenue corridors are major barriers with a hotspot at the Third and Penn Avenue intersection, which experienced the most crashes. A borough-wide traffic calming plan was recommended with a focus on planning, engineering, education, and enforcement. A concept and rendering plan were developed for the Third and Penn Avenue intersection that includes a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). It was noted that an application will be filed soon for a multimodal grant to fund these improvements. A second focus area was school zone improvements, especially along the Fifth Avenue corridor. Acceptance of the plan was requested.

Motion to accept the Active Transportation Plan. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An executive session was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening to discuss labor negotiations and personnel matters.
5. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** President Lineaweaver requested permission to amend the agenda to include the consideration of taking disciplinary action on the employment status of a Public Works employee, and to ratify previous disciplinary action. A motion was made by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick to amend the agenda to add an action item under the Manager's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Clouser questioned why the 300 Block of Reading Avenue was not paved last year when the Traffic Circle through Eighth Avenue was paved. Mr. Grassley reported that the remainder of Reading Avenue will be paved next month.

Mr. Rogers provided an update on Business Privilege Tax collection efforts for calendar year 2024, noting 170 delinquent accounts owing an average of \$600; two of the accounts are responsible for \$4,170.

Mr. Olexy spoke of an uptick in parking violations being issued in the 300 Block of Reading Avenue that appear to be slight infractions. Chief Tornielli offered to review the citations that were issued in the area, noting the intent of maintaining integrity in the parking system by not having cars parked over the lines disrupting all parking.

7. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve June 18, 2026, special meeting minutes and June 23, 2026, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

8. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1208 Parking Prohibited at All Times, Time Limit Parking & Special Purpose Parking Amendments** – Motion to adopt amendments to allow parking on the west side of the 100 Block of North Seventh Avenue, allow parking on the east side of the 200 Block of South Sixth Avenue with three-hour limits, and add a handicap parking space on the 300 Block of South Third Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Hallar Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- b. **Resolution 2026-15 Curative Zoning Amendment** – This resolution defines the curative amendment as it relates to data center and other undefined uses. Motion to define the specifics of a curative zoning amendment. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **CONSULTANTS' REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker did not have anything new to report at this time.
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Ms. Stevens noted that the multimodal grant application for the Third and Penn Avenue intersection pedestrian safety improvements, including a RRFB and added signage, will be submitted by the end of the month. A low spot at the ADA ramp was observed in the vicinity of the RRFB project at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street. Traffic Planning and Design will take this into consideration within the design specifications.

The following action items were reviewed:

1. **Green Light-Go Year 9** – Traffic Planning and Design has recommended Payment Request No. 1 to Telco in the amount of \$32,339.06. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**
2. **2026 Road Projects** – Based on a recent water main break on North Sixth Avenue and plans to replace that water main, a shift in paving projects was requested to the 100 Block of South Fourth Avenue. Change Order No. 1 has been submitted by H&K Group with a

project increase amount of \$916.50. It was noted that this increase remains below the budgeted project amount of \$350,000.

Motion to substitute South Fourth Avenue in lieu of North Sixth Avenue in the 2026 Road Projects and approve Change Order No. 1 for an increase of \$916.50 with a new contract price of \$299,867.43. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Ms. Drobnick.
Motion carried 6-0.

Ms. Stevens noted submission of a \$76,000 grant application to replace five HVAC units between Borough Hall and the Firehouse.

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Choate.
Motion carried 6-0.

10. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** President Lineaweaver shared that he was asked to rejoin the Conference Planning Committee for the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB); this year, the conference will be held in Lancaster.

President Lineaweaver reviewed the following two action items:

- a. **Skateboarding Ramp** – Use of a portion of the 433 Penn Avenue lot to host a temporary skateboarding ramp in collaboration with the Holistic Skateshop was tabled due to liability aspects such as fencing and staffing. A scaled-back version could be entertained in the future.
- b. **Borough Sanitation Feasibility Committee** – President Lineaweaver noted that we are currently six months from the end of our contract with Hollenbaugh's Trash & Recycling, LLC, with plans to extend one additional year as the contract allows. Due to recent delayed collection complaints, as seen on social media, and habitual excuses from the trash hauler, it was suggested that we explore performing our own sanitation collection, which could include yard waste. The committee would be comprised of the Borough Council President, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Council, Borough Manager, Public Works Director, Code Department Manager, with the assistance of the Borough Engineer and Solid Waste Authority, to determine costs and feasibility. President Lineaweaver noted that the last bid process yielded only two bidders and fears a monopolized increase in collection and landfill fees in the future.

Motion to create a Borough Sanitation Feasibility Committee. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Council President's report. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Miller reviewed the following action items:
- a. **Administrative Sick Bank** – The subject of establishing an Administrative Sick Bank arose following the recent announcement of an employee's resignation. The subject was presented to the Personnel Committee, which will need time to review and make a recommendation to Borough Council. This action item was tabled.
 - b. **Administrative Clerk Position** – More than 100 candidates applied for this position; 11 phone interviews were performed and six in-person interviews. Borough Council's permission was requested to extend an offer of employment to an individual.

Motion to provide an offer of employment to an individual to fill the Administrative Clerk position. **Moved** by Ms. Seaman and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Sale of Bulk Water** – A company from the Williamsport area requested to purchase and haul bulk water to a store in Hamburg, Pennsylvania for their cooling systems. A tanker of 5,000 gallons was sold to them at \$25 per 1,000 gallons. It was noted that a tap is available at the Borough Garage that is used to fill the street sweeper. Staff took advantage of the opportunity to earn money and requested ratification of this action. An amendment to the fee schedule to include this rate was suggested, as well as a policy that would include stipulations in instances of drought should this request be made on a regular basis.

Motion to ratify the sale of bulk water. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Disciplinary Action** – President Lineaweaver requested consideration to take disciplinary action on the employment status of a Public Works employee and ratify a previous action. Mr. Miller noted that the individual has been suspended since Thursday of last week under a recommendation from the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee met with Mr. Miller to review the employee's status and to review the particulars of the issues with this employee. The committee has recommended that the individual no longer be employed by the borough.

Motion to ratify previous disciplinary action, and to terminate the employment status of a Public Works employee. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Miller noted an audit of the Magisterial District Court that was shared by email with Borough Council earlier today, and a link to the Active Transportation Plan on the borough's website.

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

12. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag provided a verbal report noting her attendance at the U.S. Conference of Mayors on July 2nd for the 250th anniversary. A hero ceremony speech was provided to the West Reading and Wyomissing Rotary Club. Flags with medallions were available to give to your hero, whether that be military, EMS, or firefighter. The Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 Steam Locomotive event in the borough experienced no issues. The FIFA Soccer event at the park went well considering how quickly it was pulled together. There were kids playing soccer in the field, and afterward several attendees visited Penn Avenue for the 2nd Friday event.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli highlighted the following:

- Calls for service and officer-initiated activities are on par with previous months.

- National Night Out is planned on Tuesday, August 4 at the park and pool; planning is being finalized with Mayor Kaag.
- French Fry Festival is planned on Saturday, August 15.
- The promotional examination will take place this Saturday, followed by a structured interview conducted by the PA Chiefs of Police Association on August 26.
- A grant application was filed with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to fund the replacement of body-worn cameras and the associated software support and video storage. A thank you was shared with Borough Council, Senator Judy Schwenk, and State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz for providing their letters of support.
- On June 29, Chief Tornielli attended the quarterly Berks County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting. He was appointed to this committee several years ago as a bomb technician to meet with chemical facility companies about dual-use chemicals that could be used to manufacture explosives. Since that time, he has become one of the committee's law enforcement representatives. First responders are provided with plans and information should there be any incidents involving chemicals at local facilities.
- There were six 4th of July firework-related incidents that were called in. One incident of note was an arrest of an individual setting off large fireworks into the air around power lines.
- Consideration was requested to ratify a letter of support from Borough Council for the Chief of Police to sign documents related to the PCCD body-worn camera grant application. **Moved** by Mr. Choate and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- Consideration was requested to allow an officer to use two sickness-in-family days to care for a family member in August of 2026. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Ms. Seaman. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions about his report. There were no comments or questions.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer noted that the engine was out of service for a short time to repair the driver-side suspension airbag. Assistant Chief Andrew Gudinas submitted a letter of resignation, effective July 1, 2026. He and his wife are moving back to Pottsville to start a family. Captain Jamie Keith has assumed the Assistant Chief responsibilities for the remainder of this term. Official action will take place next month.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Seaman and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and provided the following updates:

- The contractor for 55 S. Third Avenue, Candlewood Suites, has reported that the property owner has chosen H&K Group to perform a soil nail and shotcrete retaining wall repair. Plans will be reviewed by a structural and geotechnical engineer before permitting.
- The owner of 542 Franklin Street visited the office yesterday to discuss demolition of the deteriorating garage. Financial factors were the cause of the delay in making repairs. The owner has agreed to work with the borough to remove the garage. Quotes will be requested for this demolition project.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF)** – Mr. Price provided highlights from his written report:

- Art on the Avenue had no major issues.
- The 2nd Friday event went well with live music and a pig roast.
- Preparations are underway for the French Fry Fest next month. Based on last year's numbers and vendor demand, it was thought that this event could grow.
- Fall Fest planning has begun; a request to PennDOT for permission to close Penn Avenue will be submitted soon.
- The planters are being maintained in-house this year and are looking great. A fall planting will take place; however, it's been decided not to do a winter planting this year.

Motion to accept the WRCRF report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Price departed the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

14. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – In Mr. Esterly's absence, Ms. Drobnick shared that the commission took a break for the month of July. Everything is going well with the pool and playground programs, thanks to a great staff. Planning for upcoming fall events is underway with a karaoke competition and Halloween events. Because the Christmas Tree in Delaney Circle was knocked down by a vehicle accident, alternative options for a tree lighting ceremony are being reviewed. For safety reasons, it was thought that the tree lighting ceremony should be moved away from the traffic circle.

The three action items pertained to LSA no-match grant applications for replacement of two pedestrian bridges and rehabilitation of the trail, installation and upgrade of security cameras, and creation of a pool splash pad. Estimated costs for these three projects were \$800,000, \$7,000, and \$250,000, respectively. Ms. Stevens indicated that grant applications would need to be submitted by September 30, and recommended refraining from applying for the pedestrian bridge and trail rehabilitation project until after stream bank erosion and flood mitigation

efforts are in place to improve the odds of being awarded a grant near their cap of \$1M. The three action items were tabled to allow exploration of these options.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Lineaweaver recapped conversations about a curative zoning amendment as to whether data center uses should be allowed as a conditional use or special exception. It was decided that data center uses would be heard through a special exception process to allow the borough to take a stance for or against an application. Additional language was recommended to be added to the definition of data center. Aspects such as noise, vibration, emergency backup generators, underground fuel storage, fire suppression, adequate water and power, and decommissioning were discussed. The Light Industrial District was the chosen district to house these types of uses. The draft ordinance amendment will establish a minimum setback; example ordinances used a setback of 500 feet from residences and sensitive receptors and a minimum lot size of 10 acres. These requirements would more than likely be exclusionary designations in the Borough of West Reading. Also, a catch-all use would be added to permit undefined uses in the Light Industrial District via special exception. A draft ordinance amendment should be available for review next month.

Mr. Moyer provided an overview of Quality of Life (QOL) regulations that have been tabled to focus on SALDO and curative amendments. QOL is considered nuisance issues like tall grass, hedges over sidewalks and alleys, with escalating fines to elicit quicker response times than going through the citation process. Games of Skill regulations have been tabled now that the Supreme Court ruled these devices as illegal gambling machines. The State Assembly has 120 days to deem the devices legal.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The July Economic Development Committee meeting was canceled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Kaag recapped discussions on the creation of single-use plastic regulations, as well as updates on the MORE grant and memorial garden projects.

Motion to accept the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Moved** by Mr. Choate and seconded by Ms. Seaman. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Kaag referred to the minutes and noted that the committee reviewed event, construction, and road closure policies drafted in an ordinance format for enforcement purposes. ParkMobile signs have arrived for the 433 Penn Avenue parking lot; a two-week grace period will be provided before enforcement of paid parking regulations. Costs associated with access to the Gage Personnel parking lot from Reading Avenue are under review. One space has been removed from the experimental parking area on North Seventh Avenue to improve line-of-sight issues. Possible changes to the sidewalk café regulations to include retail business sidewalk seating are under review, as well as possible changes to the permit parking program.

Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Ms. Haller Graff noted review of the tree watchlist, inventory, and trimming. Mr. Kaag shared information on the planting of eight trees along Wyomissing Creek on Old Wyomissing Road in our park system in honor of Josh Bell, a resident who enjoyed the natural environment, such as birdwatching and walking our trails. These trees have information signage and tags to provide education on the species and characteristics of each tree. The expense and maintenance of these trees have been handled entirely by Josh's Mom.

Motion to accept the Shade Tree Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Choate and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Safety Committee** – President Lineaweaver noted the review of a video on heat stress this month.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- h. **Finance Committee** – The July Finance Committee meeting was canceled.

15. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 6/30/2026** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 6/24/26 to 7/17/26 and 7/18/26 to 7/21/26** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 6/30/2026 and Payment Approval Reports of 6/24/26 through 7/21/26. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mrs. Moyer shared that \$8,346 has been collected this year in delinquent Business Privilege Taxes.

16. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers reported that he requested unregulated parking on the east side of the 200 Block of South Sixth Avenue. Mr. Grassley indicated that time limit parking had been established for the entire block. Regulations for that block could be reviewed further by the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee.

Secondly, Mr. Rogers asked if Western Berks Water Authority would have an issue with bulk water sales. Mr. Miller reviewed the contract that allows the borough to service our own customer base.

- 17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary